

Panel Discussion (contd); THR-0020

1 seven shipments that are scheduled to go out in
2 May, and we have about seven or eight that go
3 out next month.

4 MR. DEE WILLIS: More questions
5 for the Panel? Comment?

6 **THR-0020** MR. CATHY SNIEDER: Sure. I
7 will do a comment. Hi. I am Cathy Snieder,
8 and I just came from a small political group
9 here in the Gorge, and it has nothing to do
10 with Hanford unfortunately. But I just wanted
11 to talk to the people here, the local people,
12 and let them know that out of a group of nine,
13 we raised a thousand dollars for our cause
14 tonight.

15 Now, we can all band together, and I
16 know that a lot of us are feeling really
17 frustrated about this whole process, because we
18 have all been here, what, ten times, 12 times.
19 I can't even remember how many times I have
20 been here making comments.

21 What I want to say to the panel is
22 have the levels of safety been lowered to
23 accept these new shipments? Safety standards
24 get lowered all the time. And in order to make
25 more shipments come into Hanford, have the

THR-0020 (contd); Panel Discussion (contd)

2

1 safety standards been lowered so that you guys
2 can accept these new levels, these new
3 shipments of toxic waste?

4 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: The
5 answer is no, they haven't. We already have
6 this waste at Hanford that we generated.

7 MS. CATHY SNIEDER: Right.

8 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: And we
9 are treating the stuff that we are getting from
10 off-site the same way. We are dealing with the
11 stuff we are getting from off-site the same way
12 we are dealing with the stuff that we deal with
13 on-site.

14 MS. CATHY SNIEDER: Okay.
15 That's even scarier. I'm sorry.

16 MR. AMBER WALDREF: Well,
17 there's a couple different answers to that in
18 terms of safety.

19 One of the things I mentioned in my
20 presentation earlier was that levels of the
21 carbon tetrachloride in vapors coming up from
22 the existing low-level burial grounds that have
23 radioactive waste and chemical waste are
24 already exceeding the OSHA, 176 times the OSHA
25 limit level for.

96

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 So workers who are putting stuff
2 into those trenches are at risk. And that's
3 something that we have been concerned about and
4 bringing up to the state of Washington for
5 several years now. So that's one concern that
6 we have.

7 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I would
8 like to speak a little bit about that carbon
9 tet.

10 As I mentioned before, one of our
11 practices that used to happen at Hanford, was
12 they used to dump liquid low-level waste into
13 the ground. And along with some of that
14 low-level waste was carbon tetrachloride. So
15 there was this known plume of carbon
16 tetrachloride in the ground.

17 Well, as we were monitoring this, we
18 noticed some things that weren't tracking like
19 we thought. So DOE, in conjunction with, not
20 in conjunction with, but they got a sample
21 analysis plan approved by the Department of
22 Ecology, you know, let's look at other areas
23 where carbon tet. might be coming from.

24 So, what we did is we had these
25 burial grounds, and it was transuranic waste

97

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 that potentially had carbon tet. with it.

2 So what we did is there are these
3 risers that go 20 feet under the ground. We
4 send a probe down there, and sure enough, there
5 was carbon tetrachloride in there.

6 That's the kind of information we
7 wanted to know in order for when we eventually
8 exhumed this transuranic waste, sent it to
9 WIPP, we wanted to know that information, so we
10 could keep our workers safe.

11 And right now this increased
12 elevated level is not in any kind of breathing
13 space, it is at the bottom of a pipe, and to
14 say people were exposed to that level was just
15 not true.

16 MS. AMBER WALDREF: I never
17 said anyone was exposed. I said that it was
18 over the limit.

19 And the reason why we found out this
20 information, it wasn't that, you know, you put
21 out a press release. We found out through the
22 Freedom of Information Act request that we put
23 through, and we found this information, and
24 presented it.

25 I mean, I don't know if this is the

Panel Discussion (contd)

1 same carbon tetrachloride plume.

2 MR. DEE WILLIS: George
3 Sanders.

4 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: I will be
5 short. I need to address this.

6 I have a pretty clear understanding
7 of where that investigation has gone on the
8 carbon tetrachloride, and it is just like Mike
9 said, he gave you good representation of that.
10 We looked at some of the data. It told us that
11 we needed to look in other places.

12 It's an ongoing investigation. We
13 found the information. We are continuing with
14 that investigation. We have had a lot of
15 discussions with EPA. And it's an ongoing
16 effort.

17 It's not clear to us that carbon
18 tet. came from the burial grounds. And I think
19 that's following up on what Mike said, is we
20 have a plume of carbon tetrachloride from the
21 liquid discharges that is part of the past
22 practice.

23 We are not sure that this isn't from
24 that, and the burial grounds are accumulating
25 the stuff, or if indeed we may have some

99

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 contaminants in there. We will find out and
2 take the appropriate actions.

3 MR. DEE WILLIS: Panel?

4 MS. LYNN MYSTICE HEALER: Yeah.

5 My name is Lynn Mystice Healer, and I just
6 wanted to know, it's been 14 years that this
7 has been going on, this cleanup. This leaking,
8 cleanup, leaking, and it's still leaking.
9 Okay. 14 years.

10 I want to know how much money was
11 spent. And I also want to really make sure
12 that everyone sees this picture. Let's see,
13 how much money has been spent in this leaking
14 cleanup.

15 Okay. Now, this is modern, and how
16 many billions were spent to do this? I want to
17 know how much this cost. I want to know how
18 much it cost. Can you tell me?

19 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I don't
20 know how much has been spent in the past 14
21 years, but I am trying to see this. This looks
22 like transuranic waste that was already in the
23 ground and it's being dug out.

24 MS. AMBER WALDREF: No. They
25 are current trenches.

100

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: They are
2 current trenches all right.

3 MR. DEE WILLIS: It is 218 W.

4 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: W what?

5 MR. DEE WILLIS: Just a
6 minute. 4 C.

7 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: 4 C.

8 MS. LYNN MYSTICE HEALER: The
9 leaking waste, the leaking waste that's still
10 leaking. 14 years ago I heard about leaking
11 waste into the groundwater. 14 years ago.

12 How much money in 14 years has been
13 spent on Hanford cleanup to get still leaking
14 waste? 14 years. How much money?

15 MR. GREG deBRULER: They have
16 basically spent about 20 billion dollars
17 cleaning up Hanford. Okay? That's everything
18 on the site.

19 But as far as, there's two issues
20 here. There's tank waste leaking into the
21 ground, and they've supposedly stopped the tank
22 leaks from leaking into the ground. Okay?
23 There's that part.

24 And then there's this carbon tet.
25 issue, and the issue is, well, if you have

101

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 waste that has liquids in it, this low-level
2 waste, it shouldn't be leaking into the ground,
3 and maybe they have a problem. They don't
4 know. They are still investigating that.

5 MS. AMBER WALDREF: Well,
6 earlier I also stated that, in one of my
7 slides, that the groundwater monitoring wells,
8 many of them are dry, and there's not enough to
9 be monitoring all the waste currently.

10 So, whether or not some of these
11 low-level burial grounds are leaking or not, we
12 need to do some more monitoring to find that
13 out.

14 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I would
15 agree, we do need to do more monitoring.

16 We have a schedule that we have made
17 up with the state and EPA for a hundred or so
18 more wells in the next five years or something
19 like that.

20 And I just want to say one of the
21 reasons that the wells are going dry is a
22 testament to the practices that we stopped of
23 this liquid low-level waste disposal. We
24 stopped that. The wells went dry. And now we
25 are reacting to that.

102

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 So, I mean, the fact that the wells
2 went dry is an indication of a good thing
3 happening.

4 MR. NICHOLAS CETO: Yeah. I
5 just want to add to that.

6 Last night I decided I wasn't going
7 to sit up on the panel because I didn't want to
8 be in a position of defending DOE, and then I
9 kind of thought about it, and I thought, well,
10 it is important that people do know what's gone
11 on, because there are a lot of accusations and
12 a lot of information that is sort of right but
13 not completely right.

14 I think part of my responsibility is
15 just to make sure you guys get a little bit
16 more balanced story.

17 You are right, there are still leaks
18 going on at the site. But there are tremendous
19 amount of work that has been done to stop the
20 leaks that there are, to try to stop the
21 recharge of the aquifer.

22 For example, no more liquid waste
23 disposal happens on the site anymore. A lot of
24 the places where liquid wastes are dumped,
25 almost all of them now, the historic places,

103

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 like the trenches along the river, have been
2 excavated and they are going after the
3 contaminants that are there. There are pump
4 and treat systems that are there in place
5 trying to intercept it. There is one for
6 strontium 90. There is one for carbon
7 tetrachloride. Also for chromium. So that's
8 ongoing.

9 There's also been an intensive
10 effort to top the recharge of the groundwater
11 into the system.

12 It's a very arid climate. So when
13 you stop the recharge of groundwater through
14 leaking wells, through waste disposal
15 practices, the contaminants don't move as much,
16 like that sponge I talked about before.

17 So a lot of work has been done to
18 stop the leaks. They are not stopped. The
19 tanks certainly are still leaking episodically.
20 There's the K Basin lagoons along the river,
21 the tanks along the river, and the concrete
22 basins which we still believe are leaking.

23 We just penalized Energy \$76,000 for
24 being behind schedule on that.

25 So, we are trying to make sure they

104

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 get the work done. They are doing their best
2 to do it. So a lot of good things are
3 happening. There are still problems out there,
4 and that is why we are still investigating.

5 So all of us here, sitting up here,
6 including the state of Washington, you know,
7 owe it to you guys to get this changed, and we
8 are trying to get at it.

9 Don't think people aren't taking it
10 seriously. Are they doing it perfectly?
11 Absolutely not. I think people are trying to
12 improve how they do it every day, though.

13 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: Well,
14 Nick's comments, I would agree with all of
15 those.

16 I do want to characterize one thing
17 for you, though. I don't think EPA is the only
18 one up here that is capable of giving you all a
19 straight answer. And so I want to kind of take
20 a little umbrage with that. I will try to give
21 you straight answers.

22 MR. NICHOLAS CETO: George, I
23 was mostly talking about the information from
24 around the room, not from you. I didn't intend
25 for you to take it personally.

105

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: Absolutely
2 not. I think, though, Nick did characterize
3 this right. You are correct about the
4 leakages.

5 But he also said it was from these
6 past liquid discharges. Hundreds -- I mean,
7 just billions of gallons of those liquid
8 discharges have ceased now, the tanks that
9 leaked.

10 I have to tell you, I have become a
11 student of the old history, and we have some of
12 the old history from the old people, the '40s
13 and '50s guys. They took a lot of pain and
14 agony to keep free liquids out of the solid
15 burial grounds, of the solid waste burial
16 grounds.

17 And to this date, and correct me,
18 Mike, and Nick, if you have heard anything
19 differently, we have no indications that we
20 have had leakages from the solid waste burial
21 grounds. Okay?

22 We know where the other leaks have
23 come from. The majority of the contaminants in
24 the vadose zone are from these liquid
25 discharges, and we have a big job ahead of us

106

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 to try to deal with those.

2 Having said all of that, we still
3 have to make sure that there's no waste put in
4 the ground that has liquids in it, and we have
5 to take the proper precautions.

6 We are talking about building a
7 lined facility, which will help us with that.
8 Because a lined facility will help you during
9 the period the waste is open and exposed,
10 collects groundwater -- I mean, rain water for
11 you. So you can keep the recharge down.

12 So, there's a lot we are trying to
13 do, and we just have to get on top of it.

14 MR. DEE WILLIS: Panel, any
15 more?

16 Okay. I'm going to go to this
17 gentleman and then you two over here.

18 MR. JOE KATROSICK: My name is
19 Joe Katrosick. The Fast Flux reactor was shut
20 down a few weeks ago, a month ago.

21 Are there any plans, or are there
22 any other reactors on line at Hanford, or is it
23 strictly a total cleanup process there, or do
24 they have -- what are the plans for politically
25 speaking for the future for the whole nuclear

107

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 industry, or what would you call it, the
2 military industry of the nuclear age?

3 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I can
4 speak for probably Hanford and say there are no
5 plans for any new reactors there. I will say,
6 all the DOE reactors are now shut down. There
7 is a WNP 1, which is a power producing
8 reactor -- 2, sorry, is still running and
9 producing power.

10 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: But
11 that's not a DOE.

12 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Correct.
13 That is not DOE.

14 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: My name
15 is Dan Lichtenwald. I live in Goldendale,
16 Washington.

17 On the contaminants getting into the
18 river, there's really a lot of dancing around
19 on that.

20 Is there a daily or weekly or
21 monthly ongoing report on what is showing up,
22 and where does that appear? Or is monitoring
23 going on constantly?

24 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Ground-
25 water monitoring goes on constantly.

108

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: As far as
2 what's getting into the river. Getting into
3 the river, that's the big -- You know, what's
4 getting into the river?

5 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I don't
6 know if that's a single report that gives like
7 an annual update, is there?

8 MR. THOMAS STOOPS: You can get
9 that out of the annual groundwater monitoring
10 report.

11 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: Yeah.

12 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: Now,
13 that's groundwater.

14 MR. TOM STOOPS: The sampling
15 data from all the ports, and the ports were
16 installed in the bottom of the river, that has
17 that data in it, it also has the monitoring
18 well data from the treatment systems that sit
19 adjacent to the river.

20 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: Okay.
21 Are the agency and NGO people, do they get that
22 stuff, state and --

23 MR. THOMAS STOOPS: Yes.

24 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: I am
25 calling them NGO. Advocacy groups. Are they

109

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 getting it?

2 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I don't
3 know if it is automatically distributed to
4 them. Although they are welcome to have copies
5 of it.

6 MR. THOMAS STOOPS: It is
7 available on line.

8 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: It is?
9 So, I guess what I am getting at, I will have
10 to ask this question to the officials, is there
11 a policy to suppress information about levels
12 and types of contamination going into the
13 river?

14 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: No.

15 MR. GEORGE SANDERS: Not that
16 I am aware of.

17 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: Not that
18 you are aware of. All right. Thank you.

19 MR. GREG deBRULER: I want to
20 comment on this.

21 Every year there's an annual report
22 that's been produced by Pacific Northwest
23 National Labs. It's the groundwater report.
24 And about five years ago PNNL got bashed around
25 by public interest organizations and some of

110

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 the Tribes and stuff because the report was
2 kind of like apple pie and ice cream.

3 And the report got a little better,
4 but does it really give you the information
5 that you need to have to assess the livability
6 of the ecosystem?

7 No. It gives you some numbers. It
8 gives you mean annual averages. It doesn't
9 really tell you what the peaks are.

10 If you look at the lack of extensive
11 monitoring that really would be, should be
12 required, it's not there.

13 So, when you hear tonight that they
14 are now in agreement, they are going to put in
15 100 wells in the next five years, if you look
16 at the noncompliance that started in 1999, the
17 Department of Energy was supposed to put in up
18 to 50 wells a year, and it's now 2003, and they
19 now have an agreement that they are going to
20 put up to 50 wells in, what was the number
21 again? 100 wells in the next five years.

22 So there's a lot of work that could
23 be done.

24 And then just to carry that a little
25 further, when you think of them trying to

111

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 release the river corridor as being clean in
2 the year 2012, this is the Department of
3 Energy's goal, which is I think, forget it, you
4 couldn't even get to there, but let's say they
5 try that, the amount of extensive monitoring
6 that should be required is going to be a real
7 battle, because if you look at the Department
8 of Energy and what they call their long-term
9 stewardship, it's a bunch of words. They
10 really haven't allocated the resources and
11 really looked comprehensively of how to set
12 this thing up. So, you know, we are still kind
13 of grappling in the dark, I think.

14 MR. DEE WILLIS: Panel?

15 MR. NICHOLAS CETO: In addition
16 to the groundwater monitoring report, there's
17 also a site-wide monitoring report that comes
18 out every year, too.

19 So we get a pretty good look at
20 what's going on. We don't, EPA doesn't collect
21 a lot of that data. It's done by contractors
22 for DOE.

23 But this year EPA is going to be
24 going out in the field, actually in the next
25 couple of months, to collect some of our own

112

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Panel Discussion (contd); THR-0021

1 data, just part of our process, and then we are
2 hoping it is going to feed us a ecological risk
3 assessment which we are going to do for the
4 river corridor, and we hope to get a lot of
5 Hanford stakeholders involved in helping us
6 scope that out.

7 **THR-0021** MR. GREG deBRULER: Actually I
8 have one other thought that I needed to throw
9 in.

10 You heard that they are going to be
11 doing a potential river corridor assessment to
12 look at the complete 51 miles of the Columbia
13 River, the Hanford Reach, to look, do a risk
14 assessment for that.

15 And do you know what I find that is
16 just totally amazing, is that they refer in
17 their risk assessment to assume that the river
18 is ever going to change over time. They refuse
19 to assume that the dams are going to come out
20 and there could be catastrophic flooding.

21 So, when you think of the waste that
22 they are digging down 15 feet and cleaning up
23 the first part of the contamination, the next
24 20 feet that's still highly contaminated is
25 going to be affected if there is catastrophic

113

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THR-0021 (contd)

1

1 flooding or if the river changes in elevation
2 constantly, because let's say they want to save
3 a lot of salmon and they increase the flow.

4 But in their modeling they refuse to
5 assess that.

6 And the other thing that they refuse
7 to access is the combined effects of other
8 plumes migrating into other plumes.

2

9 For example, at the Strontium 90
10 plume at Hanford, which is at N-Area, which
11 Strontium 90, if you are deficient in calcium,
12 your body absorbs it like calcium, so think of
13 fish.

14 This is an extremely contaminated
15 site. There is a sodium plume that is right
16 beside it.

17 Back in the old days, like '94, '93,
18 they talked about the sodium plume eventually
19 migrating into the strontium 90 plume, which
20 would then dissorb it, make the strontium 90
21 release and go into the river. They refuse to
22 model that.

23 So, going back to the question, is
24 there a conspiracy or a directive? No. But
25 there is a conflict --

114

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THR-0021 (contd) Panel Discussion (contd)

3

1 MR. DAN LICHTENWALD: Policy.

2 MR. GREG deBRULER: Policy.

3 There is the word.

4 But there is a conflict of interest.

5 And this was addressed by Secretary O'Leary
6 originally when we bought it up, because the
7 Pacific Northwest National Lab is a polluter.
8 They are also the ones that do most of the risk
9 assessment work at Hanford.

10 And we have tried forever to break
11 that cycle. That's why we required a Columbia
12 River Comprehensive Impact Assessment that was
13 done by an independent team not beholdng to
14 DOE, and we have been fought every tooth and
15 step of the way. And so we still have the
16 problem.

17 MR. DEE WILLIS: Nick?

18 MR. NICHOLAS CETO: Yeah. I
19 think this is why I decided to sit up here.

20 You know, I appreciate Greg's trying
21 to get you folks involved in this, and I think
22 it's a great thing for public involvement.

23 But I think I just seconds before he
24 took the microphone said we were going to get
25 everyone involved in scoping this out. So I

115

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 think it's really inappropriate for Greg to
2 guess what we are going to do before we even
3 talk to anybody about what we are going to do.

4 So, it's not really fair to say
5 that. So you just need to understand that when
6 we say we are going to scope it and talk about
7 it, that's what we are going to do, and it is
8 going to get you folks involved, and it may
9 well be that that is something that is looked
10 at. I can't say that it will or won't be.

11 But I don't think it is fair to
12 assume that it won't.

13 MR. GREG deBRULER: I need to
14 finish this. This is, you know, this is
15 point/counterpoint, here we are, welcome to
16 America.

17 Four months ago I wrote a letter to
18 the Department of Energy, asking the Department
19 of Energy and the Tri-Party agencies, along
20 with Fish and Wildlife, to stop the work on the
21 ecological risk assessment of the N-Area, and
22 the reason why I asked them to do that is
23 because four years ago, three years ago, Dennis
24 Faulk, four years ago Dennis Faulk and I
25 talked, in 1999, about doing a comprehensive

116

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